

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1-17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A ~~vaccine~~ composition, comprising:

a *Streptococcus suis* mutant deficient in capsular expression, wherein the *Streptococcus suis* mutant comprises a mutation causing the deficiency in a sequence selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 9, SEQ ID NO: 29, SEQ ID NO: 37 and SEQ ID NO: 43; capsular expression is stable and

a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or adjuvant.

19-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~ composition of claim 18, wherein said *Streptococcus suis* mutant deficient in capsular expression is capable of surviving in an immune-competent host.

22. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~ composition of claim 21, wherein said *Streptococcus suis* mutant deficient in capsular expression is capable of surviving at least 4-5 days in said immune-competent host.

23. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~ composition of claim 18, wherein said *Streptococcus suis* mutant deficient in capsular expression expresses a *Streptococcus* virulence factor or antigenic determinant.

24. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~ composition of claim 18, wherein said *Streptococcus suis* mutant deficient in capsular expression expresses a non-*Streptococcus* protein.

25. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~ composition of claim 24, wherein said non-*Streptococcus* protein has been derived from a pathogen.

26-31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~-composition of claim 21, wherein said *Streptococcus suis* mutant has been produced by homologous recombination.

33. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~-composition of claim 21, wherein said *Streptococcus suis* mutant is capable of surviving at least 8-10 days in said host.

34-37. (Canceled)

38. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~-composition of claim 22, wherein said *Streptococcus suis* mutant deficient in capsular expression expresses a *Streptococcus* virulence factor or antigenic determinant.

39-49. (Canceled)

50. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~-composition of claim 38, wherein said *Streptococcus suis* mutant deficient in capsular expression expresses a non-*Streptococcus* protein.

51-52. (Canceled)

53. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~-composition of claim-~~52~~ 18, wherein the ~~stable~~ mutation comprises a knock-out in the ~~capsular gene cluster~~ sequence.

54. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~-composition of claim-~~52~~ 18, wherein the mutation comprises a mutated cpsB gene, a mutated cpsEF gene, or a combination thereof.

55. (Currently amended) The ~~vaccine~~-composition of claim-~~52~~ 18, wherein the *Streptococcus suis* ~~cell~~ expresses a non-*Streptococcal* protein.

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56-57. (Canceled)